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DCRA CONSUMER ALERT

DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS · OFFICE OF CONSUMER PROTECTION

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Economic Stimulus Checks

No Action Needed to Receive Payment If You Filed Federal Tax Return

Starting May 2, 2008, the United States Treasury will begin sending economic stimulus payments to more than 130 million individuals. The stimulus payments will be sent through the late spring and summer.

The vast majority of Americans who qualify for an economic stimulus payment will not have to do anything other than file their 2007 individual income tax return to receive their payment this year.

They will not have to complete applications, file any extra forms or call the Internal Revenue Service to request the payment - the payment is automatic. The IRS will determine eligibility, figure the amount and issue the payment.

What Are Suspicious e-mails or Phishing?

Phishing, as it is called, is the act of sending an e-mail to a user falsely claiming to be an established legitimate enterprise in an attempt to scam the user into surrendering private information that will be used for identity theft.

Report Phishing, e-mail scams and Bogus IRS Web Sites.

According to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the nation's consumer protection agency, phishers send an e-mail or pop-up message that claims to be from a business or organization that you may deal with — for example, an Internet service provider (ISP), bank, online payment service, or even a government agency. The message may ask you to "update," "validate," or "confirm" your account information. Some phishing e-mails threaten a dire consequence if you don't respond. The messages direct you to a Web site that looks just like a legitimate organization's site. But it isn't. It's a bogus site whose sole purpose is to trick you into divulging your personal information so the operators can steal your identity and run up bills or

commit crimes in your name.

The IRS can use the information, URLs and links in the suspicious e-mails you forward to trace the hosting Web site and alert authorities to help shut down the fraudulent sites.

Where Do I Report A Suspected Scheme?

For schemes other than phishing, please report the fraudulent misuse of the IRS name, logo, forms or other IRS property by calling the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration's toll-free hotline at **1-800-366-4484**.

How Will Payment Be Sent?

Stimulus payments will be direct deposited for taxpayers selecting that option when filing their 2007 tax returns. Taxpayers who have already filed with direct deposit won't need to do anything else to receive the stimulus payment. For taxpayers who haven't filed their 2007 returns yet, the IRS reminds them that direct deposit is the fastest way to get both regular refunds and

stimulus payments.

People who file a return after April 15 will receive their economic stimulus payment, but probably about two weeks later than the schedule shows. A return must be filed by October 15 in order to receive a stimulus payment this year. See the online calculator for an estimate of the amount you will receive.

A small percentage of tax returns will require additional time to process and to compute a stimulus payment amount.

For these returns, stimulus payments may not be issued in accordance with the schedule above, even if the tax return was processed by April 15.

Contact DCRA's Office of Consumer Protection if you have been contacted by an individual or company asking for personal information regarding your economic stimulus checks, call **202-442-4400** or visit **www.dkra.dc.gov**.



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Call DCRA at (202) 442-4400 or visit us at 941 North Capitol Street NE, Washington, DC 20002.